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A Fox-Crow Variety Studio Production
Scheme Season, vol. 2: Pharmacopoeia Rhetoricae © 2026 by Jade Ann Brennan is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International

Pharmacopoia Rhetoricae is a term that's been bouncing around my head for the last year or so. It roughly means a book of medicinal specifications but for persuasive speech. Is it instructions on how to create propaganda, or how to cure it? This zine-chapbook is not the actual *Pharmacopoia* (This is just a tribute), but historical materialist analysis and lived experience are both a part of it, and the wheel has been invented already. The pieces in this issue are largely centered around living under and surviving the weight of the current societal dogma, which essentializes the vulnerable and makes ripe for the reaping. It sucks, especially as a trans parent. There is so much terror—and joy.

The Lady of Shallot, of the famous poem "The Lady of Shallot is tied into all this in a way I didn't fully understand until compiling the other poems. Some of the themes identified in literary analysis include both feminine sexuality and the role of the artist. As an observer, can they truly engage with the truth of what they record without being utterly destroyed? In a world of surveillance where journalists are targets yet everyone is equipped with mass media devices, the question hangs Damoclestianly over us. Tennyson's poem diverges so much from the original Arthurian tale that I can't help but see in the titular character a longing — not *for* Lancelot, but to *be* him. That vague curse, the feeling that something will go wrong if you step out of your comfort zone, can be a prelude to transformation. As Antonio Gramsci's is often loosely translate: "The old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born: now is the time of monsters."

Scheme Season

by Jade Ann Brennan

Volume 2:
Pharmacopoia Rhetoricae
February 2026

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All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
    As he rode down to Camelot.
As often through the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
    Moves over still Shalott.

Underneath the bearded barley,
The reaper, reaping late and early,
Hears him ever chanting cheerly,
Like an angel, singing clearly,
    As he rode down from Camelot.
Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
"Tirra lirra," by the river
    Sang true Lancelot

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
    She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
    The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
    Turned to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
    The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
      Music came from Camelot:
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'I am sick of shadows,' whisper
      Fairy Lancelot.

Pharmacopoeia

How to treat the chronic infection
There’s no magic injection to find
Snake oil fish tank dewormer pills
Are symptoms of the rising fever

But the slow parts, the pain management
Physical therapy exercises
Eating and sleeping sufficiently
Counteracting the desperation

The book’s a living, breathing body
Every cell carries memory
Sleeping—driving—marching—recording
We already know the recipe

Stained Glass

I'm stained Glass
Shattered pieces, uneven edges
Not broken, fitted with iron
Rocks rebreak, cut flesh
But they can never hold back the sun
Penetrating without destruction
Stories for illiterate ancestors
Not wordless, music without instruments
Picking up piece after piece
Another window, a new color
Son
Daughter
Mother
Over centuries lost and recovered
An island is just an island
The children wander wherever takes them
The trail ends at the sea
The sand, beginning of glass
Furnaces burning
Ashes to stardust
Bottles on pavement
Sweep away from small feet
Can you see through me?
You stand at the window
Naming trucks and animals

The Lady of Shalott, Part V[1]

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
    Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
    The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
    All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in His mercy lend her grace,
    The Lady of Shalott."

They cross'd themselves, their stars they blest,
Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire, and guest.
There lay a parchment on her breast,
That puzzled more than all the rest,
      The wellfed wits at Camelot.
'The web was woven curiously,
The charm is broken utterly,
Draw near and fear not,—this is I,
      The Lady of Shalott.'

[1] Arranged from the text of “The Lady of Shalott” from *Poems* (1932) and “The Lady of Shalott” from *Poems* (1942) by Alfred Lord Tennyson, using only words and lines from either version.

Drowning

Every gasp for air is a breath of water
Reach out for someone to pull you out
But their hands hold your head under
Searching, vision obscured with silt
The surf rises up and fills you again
Suffocation
there is just too much

Frances Rose

To the tune that will not play
Sing the song of Frances Rose
Child with no womb to grow
Fantasy to see one day

Brother Gabriel would love
Holding you for lullabies
Words to teach no ears or eye
I am only dreaming of

8 lbs 6 oz

When you were born I could not
Even hold you, you had a
Tube in your throat, except for
When the NICU nurse helped me
To wash your fragile body
I sat with you and I cried
Now you weigh twenty pounds more
Two and a half years later
I am rocking you to sleep
Holding you horizontal
You outpace my strength to lift
You are never a burden

Potty

My son peed in the potty today
Another person was killed by police
And another and another and another
The whole country is in the pisspot

Yet this small moment
An accomplishment
A tiny milestone
Every little step is an act of resistance

Live but do not uphold
Though it makes you an enemy
The child needs to learn
Everyday skills
How not to be afraid
Of the toilet or the terrorizer

Crone

God I just want to be a crone
I want so badly to age into an old hag
Grayest of hair and wrinkliest of skin
Tits sagging to my feet
I want to live as long as my great grandmothers
Ninety-nine to a hundred-and-one
Call me the Raisin Mother
Bare knobby knuckle-deep kneading dough
Bog dweller, smell of piss
Blind eyes and tasteless mashing
Cool wind and warm sun on my blotchy face
Grizzled rhinoceresque witch
Long, long live

Pornographica

Transmute skin into magazine paper
Bones become molded silicone
Muscles and fascia made of rope
Bound together Frankenstein straw

I am your creation to rip and destroy
Ragdoll delicate sheen — consume me
Stuff your jealous mouth with my image
The faint radioactivity in my kaolin gloss

Mashed pulp and ink, shred and rearrange
People-mâché, latex balloon-sculpted air
Your creature, filled with all the desired spoils
Ready for the beating — monstrous delicacy

Christ of the Apartment Complex

Don't wonder what it will be like
When Jesus returns
He's already here
Every slur you murdered
Every child you raped
Every starving belly
Every claim you denied
Every profit you took
Angels descended
Lined up zip tied wrists
Lord, Lord — show me heaven
It's not white, clouds and trumpets
You already blew it sky high
Dumped your trash in the crater
The devils are your day job
White savior genocide
You can eat your hoods
While the world's food burns

Pet Store

I went to my favorite thrift store last night
Where the register has a trans pride flag
Near the pet store where my uncle died

Tried on pants worn by some other woman
As my body changes into a familiar shape
By the pet store where my uncle died

Drove down the parking lot with groceries
My child's favorite foods, a mother knows
Past the pet store where my uncle died

Rain trickling, wipers brush the drops aside
I think about how he fell and hit his head
At the pet store where my uncle died

His brain compressed with blood building up
My grandma debating what to do in the ER
After the pet store where my uncle died

My sister and I got his car, it had cat food
I ate cold fries as we drove back home
From the pet store where my uncle died

Psychologia

Take a child[1]
Break down into constituent parts
Heart[2]
Brain[3]
Guts[4]
Fingers[5]
Eyes[6]
Bones[7]
Arrange on a platter
Add some garnish[8]
It can be for display
For guests to pick at
When you're done
Wrap in plastic, foil, freon
Eternally fresh spoils[9]

---

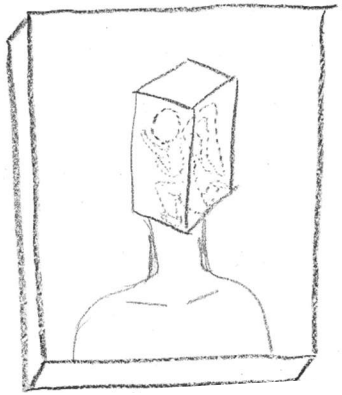
[1] Any will do
[2] Pound until tenderized
[3] Thoroughly scrub
[4] Stuff with mixed contents
[5] Chop finely
[6] Sew shut
[7] May be ground up or used as utensils
[8] Smile, hair, and skin acceptable to you
[9] Throw in the trash for convenience

Rhetorica

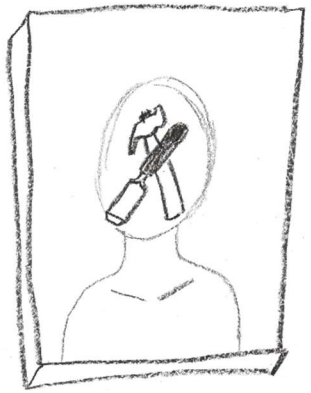
Couched in every lie that women 'aren't funny'
or smart or can't write
is the quiet part, they just don't deserve
the credit or to say it
Men certainly don't think the first part
when they take what women make
pass it off as their own, get famous off it,
retire and demand servitude
But now we have it both ways,
a woman at a podium proudly declaring
it's her expression of freedom to prosecute
anyone who defies the man
And she can sponge up the sludge,
a magnet for the audience's sexism
because selfishness and self-hatred
is empowerment [read: useful]

Angel

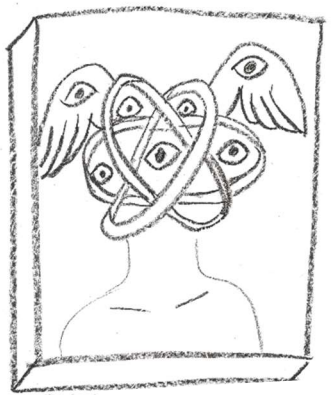
YOU MAY SEE AN UNFIXABLE SCRIBBLE IN THE MIRROR



THEN YOU BEGIN TO FIND THE ANGLE IN THE MARBLE



YOU CHISEL AND CUT TO TRY TO FREE IT



BUT YOUR TRUE SHAPE MAYBE CAN'T BE PICTURED OR CAPTURED

Sterner

— my Star
So impossibly far away
Long dead, but the light hasn't burned itself out in my eyes
Yet
I'm not who I was when I first started writing to you
After your heart — random failure — gave out
Was there room in it for me?
Would you see the me that is me —
The full constellation we were small parts of
When I see your brothers, I don't know what to say
Did I ever know you?

Why is there this pain, of not knowing if I would know
You could rise again a new night
I would have you again
But you not see me
I would die

The slow explosion expanding universe
My heart in redshift hurtling, smeared
Longer wavelengths, lower frequency
Your fading light more and more forgotten overhead
Goddamnit, you were never mine — are not now

You will never speak my name
Never hear it
Nor meet my son
Say how he looks like me
My wishes fall into the silent void
I don't know if there is latent gravity
The mass must still be there
Pulling on my soul like this
My child will only ever know a photo
What is the point of showing him?

ASAS-SN began collecting data the month you died
In October, two separate novae were observed in the galactic bulge
Maybe it means nothing, or too many somethings to count
Various astronomical institutes contributing information
Follow-ups and confirmations
Like the little memories left on your profile
Piecing together an image